

Tempe Fire Department Policies and Procedures

Dive Team Operations

208.06

11-01-04

PURPOSE

To define the operating procedures for The Tempe Fire Department Dive Team (Team).

STRUCTURE

The Dive Team consists of Divers and Dive Tenders. Diving operations are of a technical nature and are assigned to our Technical Rescue Team based on L276. Dive Tender operations are imperative for each operation and are based on E275, which also has the primary responsibilities of Fire Boat 271. There are TRT Rovers maintained for each shift that are also trained as Divers.

Divers will be certified in Open Water, Drysuit, Full Face Mask, and Emergency Response Divers International (ERDI) courses.

Dive Tenders will be certified in Open Water and Dive Tender courses. It is their job to support a diver from beginning to end of an operation. This includes assembly and disassembly of gear, donning of gear/equipment, monitoring diver's bubbles and the dive area, staying in constant communication with the Diver, and aborting the dive if necessary. The Tender is the eyes, ears, and safety for the Diver.

OPERATIONS

Dispatch for a Dive assignment will be a 2-1 including L276, E275, Additional ALS, BC271, SS271, SW Ambulance unit, and CARE 7. (C2740 the Dive Team Coordinator, C2739 (TRT Captain), C274, and C278 will be paged. The Responsible Party for the body of water being dove will be notified.

Via direct communication between CMD, the Technical Sector Office (TSO) and/or dive team, a determination will be made as to whether we are in a rescue or recovery mode, and the strategy declared. A written incident action plan should be considered

The Dive Team is to operate within the Automatic Aid System. Callbacks may also be used for extended or low priority dive operations at the approval of the Duty Chief. Special requests out of the system (Lakes Pleasant, Saguaro, Bartlett, etc.) will always be recovery and not rescue in nature and must be approved by the Fire Chief or his representative and may require a call back of off duty Dive Team members.

CMD, the TSO, or any member of the Team can abort a dive. Any member of the Team can choose not to dive without penalty. This is a very specialized and dangerous procedure, if it does not feel or look right we do not want to risk our personnel and can terminate or suspend dive operations. The Team will use the benefit/risk profile on every mission before implementing an action plan.

The TSO will be in charge of the Dive portion of the operation and may be a member of the Team.

The Team will be in "rescue mode" up to 1 hour from a submersion. When an imminent rescue attempt is going to be made, team members will make a judgment call on entry and equipment needs for starting the operation, (example: a child is witnessed falling from a boat).

Each operation will include:

- Primary Diver
- Primary Tender
- Back-up Diver
- Back-up Tender
- 90% Diver

The Primary Diver will not enter the water until a Back-up Diver and Tender are in place. Normally there will be only one Diver submerged at a time.

Routine operations require that a checkout be completed by the TSO before beginning.

During routine operations the Diver will be tethered to the Tender utilizing full-face communications. The Dive will not exceed 20 minutes or go below 1,000 psi tank pressure. An additional five minutes can be allowed if a situation dictates.

Divers will be able to dive in conditions for which they are trained and will not exceed their capabilities. (example: as of May 2004 dive can be made in up to 30' in still water, divers are not allowed in moving water or an overhead environment.)

EQUIPMENT

1. Drysuit, gloves, and hood
2. Buoyancy Compensator Device (BCD) with power inflator, minimal lift of 40 lbs.
3. 1 knife and 2 shears with nothing in the leg area
4. Environmentally sealed Regulator with analog gages
5. Quick release redundant air supply with regulator and minimum of 18 cu. ft.
6. Primary air tank 80 cu. ft. at 3,000 psi (2,800 min)
7. Fins
8. Weight belt with quick release buckle
9. Full face mask with communications
10. Standard mask worn around neck
11. Chest diving harness for tethered diving
12. Carabiners and contingency straps for back-up divers
13. Tether/communication lines of 125'
14. Personal floatation device (PFD) for Tender

All equipment is expendable and should be ditched to facilitate a rescue or save yourself.

Each Diver is also issued:

- Snorkel
- Wetsuit
- Booties
- Dive bag

RECORDS

The following information is to be logged and entered into Firehouse for every subsurface operation or mission.

1. Names of Divers/Tenders
2. Pre-dive safety check
3. Times in and out
4. Blood pressure, pulse (bypassed in rescue mode)
5. Tank psi at 5 min increments
6. Depth, visibility, bottom topography
7. Outcome narrative/after action report

A sketch of the search area will be made by the topside Team and show the area where the Diver/s have searched. Typically this will be done by the Back-up Tender.

TRAINING

Each Diver will maintain a log book and must log 10 open water dives annually. They must also log a minimum of 10 training sessions annually with 12 preferred. The training sessions can count as the open water dives. If done on duty, the target day is Tuesday.

All Divers will complete the swim qualifications for their certificates twice per year.

SPECIAL EVENTS

There may be various special events held at the Town Lake that require that divers be present. If the hosting organization is willing to pay for divers, we will hire back members of the team with the proper gear. Fire Boat Qualified (Team) personnel can also take mask, fins, snorkel, and the like on the boat to use for rescue situations when manning special events on FB271.